

# Suggested Social Media Member Guidelines

## Massachusetts Library Association

Massachusetts Library Association members may choose to identify themselves as belonging to the Massachusetts Library Association or to the broader professional library community. As outlined in MLA's Social Media Policy, content posted by MLA members on personal social media accounts are reflective of the member's personal views and do not serve as an official channel or position of the Association.

Library workers who engage on social media in a personal capacity are encouraged to consider the following guidelines when engaging online:

- **Use a Disclaimer.** If you talk about your professional work on any website or social media platform, use a disclaimer stating that your views are personal and are not affiliated with any employer or professional association of which you may be a part.
- **Be Deliberate.** Think about the type of image that you want to cultivate on behalf of your professional identity when you engage online. Remember that activity from your accounts may potentially be screenshotted, printed, and/or copied, and, will be visible and/or permanently archived on the internet once you publish.
- **Practice Responsible Digital Hygiene.** Be proactive about safeguarding your account information. Take steps to secure your login and account information by developing a strong passphrase and periodically updating your passphrase due to data breaches, hacks, or other vulnerabilities that occur due to online environments. Review the account settings on the platforms you use and consider whether or how you would like your content to be visible to others, or if the content or platform still serves your best interests. If the content or platform(s) no longer serve your best interests, consider removing content and/or dissolving the site or account entirely.
- **Be Discreet.** Be careful not to disclose sensitive or proprietary information or any internal matter through or to employer-owned and/or association-owned direct messaging or posts. Disclosing private information about specific individuals compromises the individual's right to privacy and becomes part of the permanent public record.

- **Respect Others.** Consider the privacy of your colleagues and avoid posting their full names, videos of them, or internal conversations, or tagging their personal pages without their permission.
- **Disagree, Don't Destroy.** If you have a difference of opinion with someone online or wish to post about a controversial matter, express yourself professionally. Voice your opinion, but do not use web platforms for personal attacks, and keep in mind that internet-based activity is not private and may impact your professional identity, workplace, and/or professional affiliations.
- **Be Accurate.** You are responsible for checking the accuracy of the information you post online. Be diligent in your research to ensure that your posts are factually correct and, if possible, provide supporting sources. Adhere to copyright and give credit where credit is due.
- **Accept Responsibility.** If you are wrong about something, admit your mistake, commit to doing better, and move forward.

### **Acknowledgments**

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Ratified by MLA Public Relations Committee on February 3, 2021

Adopted by MLA Executive Board on Friday, February 12, 2021

Massachusetts Library Association thanks Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield's Public Library for permission to adopt select language and ideas from their Social Media Policy for inclusion in MLA's Suggested Social Media Member Guidelines.